HOLLYWOOD REPORTER
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TV review

'Fatal Deception'

By Laurence Vittes

Every November, Marina Oswald (Helena Bonham Carter) tells writer David Lifton (Robert Picardo) in "Fatal Deception: Mrs. Lee Harvey Oswald" there are stories about the "wife of the assassin."

This year, the 30th anniversary of the still-mysterious and ever-intriguing JFK assassination, NBC's wife-of-the-assassin offering is a magnificently done two-hour telefilm airing as its "Monday Night at the Movies."

And although it seems to add little more than grateful familiarity with both Marina and Lee Harvey (Frank Whaley) plus the usual nuances of unsubstantiated doubt to the eternal murder mystery, it shows that a movie made for television is fully capable of rivaling its big-screen relatives in quality, intensity and impact.

Much of that is due to Steve Bello's superbly understated script, Robert Dornhelm's generally unobtrusive but creative direction (note the repeated shots from and of second-story windows as if resonating from the Book Depository), and the location shooting in Dallas and Moscow.

Film tells personal story of Marina Oswald (Helena Bonham Carter).

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All these factors allow the uniformly excellent cast of actors to convincingly explore the emotionally and historically charged roles they are playing.

Most credit, however, is due to Carter (who will be familiar to viewers for her role in "Howards End") who uses a superb technique (not only is her Russian accent nearly flawless, it changes beautifully the longer she is in the United States) and a lot of subtle touches and physical gestures (such as her hurrying to the door to let Oswald into her uncle's apartment) to indelibly touch Marina Oswald with affection far more than with pity.

Whaley as Oswald is also excellent, but his role is necessarily more vague, and in that vagueness lies the film's weakness.

Although "Fatal Deception" is sensationally billed as Marina telling her story for the first time, this two-hour telefilm is more a story of a brave woman whose husband happened to be a presidential assassin than a major historical revelation.

FATAL DECEPTION:
MRS. LEE HARVEY OSWALD
NBC

A David L. Wolper Production
in association with Bernard Sofronski
and Warner Bros. Television Distribution

Executive producers ..... Bernard Sofronski, David L. Wolper
Producer ..... Paul Pompian
Co-producer ..... Steve Bello
Director ..... Robert Dornhelm
Writer ..... Steve Bello
Editor ..... Gerry Hambling
Photography ..... Yuri Neyman
Music ..... Harald Kloser

Cast: Helena Bonham Carter, Frank Whaley, Robert Picardo, Bill Bolender, Brandon Smith, Lisa Renee Wilson, Deborah Dawn Slaboda, Ingeborga Dapkunaite

Airdate: Monday, Nov. 15, 9-11 p.m.